

State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



JOEY STRICKLAND
SECRETARY

Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs

TO: Chas Nichols

FROM: Homer F. Rodgers

RE: Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget Request Hearings Letter dated Sept. 21, 2016

RE: House Appropriations Committee Budget Request Hearings, email
November 16, 2016

1. During the 2016 sessions, what did the department testify would be the effects of the FY 17 budget on services, staffing, and contracts?

➤ *The Department viewed the FY 17 budget to be as lean as possible and that any decrease in any programs would begin to limit the Department's ability to continue to provide adequate services to veterans as outlined in the budget and Strategic Plan.*

2. Compared to FY 16, what reductions, including services, staffing, and contracts, have been made in the department in FY 17?

➤ *The Department made no reductions to staffing and services. All positions in Contact Assistance have been filled. These personnel provide in part a return on investment of \$1.161 Billion per year to revenue to the State through disability payments and claims to veterans.*

➤ *There were no contracts in effect at LDVA.*

3. What reductions would the department make if there are mid-winter reductions to the FY 17 budget?

➤ **The Department was not able to make any deductions**

4. Provide a brief overview of the FY 18 budget request compared to FY 17 by budget unit. What increases are requested for FY 18 and why are the increases necessary, including any new or expanded programs or services to additional populations? Are there any reductions in the FY 18 budget requests, including those as a result of annualized reductions made in FY 17?

The Department's overall budget will increase \$5,401,879 from the previous year:

The Department has requested the following increases shown on the next page:

Agency	EOB	FY 18 Requested	Variance (\$) over EOB	Variance	
03-130	Department of Veterans Affairs	\$ 9,169,610	\$ 9,965,389	\$ 795,779	1.3%
03-131	La. Veterans Home, Jackson	\$ 10,079,402	\$ 10,551,356	\$ 471,954	0.8%
03-132	Northeast La. Veterans Home, Monroe	\$ 10,395,859	\$ 11,272,493	\$ 876,634	1.4%
03-134	Southwest La. Veterans Home, Jennings	\$ 10,334,153	\$ 11,603,388	\$ 1,269,235	2.1%
03-135	Northwest La. Veterans Home, Bossier	\$ 10,578,711	\$ 11,254,150	\$ 675,439	1.1%
03-136	Southeast La. Veterans Home, Reserve	\$ 11,354,045	\$ 12,666,883	\$ 1,312,838	2.1%
	TOTAL	\$ 61,911,780	\$ 67,313,659	\$ 5,401,879	8.7%

Explanation

- 03-130 Replacement Equipment for the Cemetery Program, replacement computers/printers, vehicles, restored funding to historic levels for the Military Family Assistance Fund, realign funding for the Cemetery Program with burials performed, and mandatory adjustments.
- 03-131 Acquisitions increased for replacement equipment (computers, commercial mower, serving line, replacement, replacement beds, 15 passenger bus, tractor, salary and related benefits mandatory adjustments, and funding for IAT services. The amount will be paid with Federal funds. No State funds are requested.
- 03-132 Mandatory adjustments per OPB instructions for Salaries and Related Benefits, inflation, IAT expenditures, remove IAT and Self-generated revenues, and increases for services, supplies (medicines, medical supplies, food,) ORM premiums, SRM charges and a 20% share for the internal auditor. The amount will be paid with Federal funds. No State funds are requested.
- 03-134 Mandatory adjustments per OPB instructions for Salaries and Related Benefits, inflation, IAT expenditures, and budget alignments to projected revenue and expenditures category. The amount will be paid with Federal funds. No state funds are requested.
- 03-135 Mandatory adjustments per OPB instructions for Salaries and Related Benefits, inflation, IAT expenditures and needed repairs and replacement equipment for the facility. The amount will be paid with Federal funds. No State funds are requested.
- 03-136 Mandatory adjustments per OPB instructions for Salaries and Related Benefits, inflation, IAT expenditure and repairs (plumbing, boiler, roof, electrical) and replacement equipment (furniture, medical equipment, grounds maintenance equipment, beds & mattresses.) The amount will be paid with Federal funds. No State funds are requested.

5. Has the department added any positions, including classified, unclassified, and other charges positions in FY 17? If so, how many and what positions? Did the department request additional positions in the FY 18 budget request? If so, how many and what positions?

➤ *The Department was approved to add two (2) unfunded staff (from 54 to 56) in Contact Assistance during FY16-17. This increase was needed to improve contact assistance services to the Veterans in the state. There are no planned increase or decrease in FY 17-18.*

6. Provide a summary of changes in salaries from FY 16 to FY 17, including performances adjustment, promotions, or any other change in salaries. Provide a summary of request changes in salaries from FY 17 to FY 18, including performance, promotions, and any other changes in salaries.

Salaries	FY 2016-17 Existing Operating Budget	FY 2017-18 Requested Budget	Difference	Percent Increase
Regular	\$4,321,948	\$5,114,218	\$792,270	18.33%
Other Comp	\$17,080	\$17,080	\$9	0.00%
Related Benefits	\$2,415,747	\$2,576,596	\$160,849	6.66%
TOTAL	\$6,754,775	\$7,707,894	\$953,110	14.11%

**This is a realignment with current staffing and budget per BA9B.*

7. What budget adjustments have been made since the initial appropriation to your department? How much in each means of finance has been appropriated to each agency since the initial appropriation?

➤ *03-130 Department of Veterans Affairs - A budget adjustment since the initial appropriation to the department was a BA-7 to increase spending authority for the Military Family Assistance fund in the amount of \$350,000. This increase was made to agency 03-130, Veterans Affairs, Administrative Program.*

➤ *03-132 Northeast La. Veterans Home – A budget adjustment since the initial appropriation to this facility was a BA-7 to swap Federal revenues to replace IAT and Self-generated revenues for necessary expenditures to the agency such as replacement vehicles, medicine, food, providing services, and needed medical supplies.*

8. Do your spending and staffing levels match the priorities of your department?
- ***Yes, the Department spending and staffing levels match the priorities of serving the veterans in the State of Louisiana, and ensuring that the veterans receive all eligible benefits for their spouses and dependents.***
9. Provide the top 5 performance measures that give the outcomes in your department. How do you rank nationally based on these priority measures?
- ***Top 5 Performance Measures***
 - 1) ***Percentage of Department Operational Objectives Achieved***
 - 2) ***Number of Contacts Made***
 - 3) ***Number of Claims Processed***
 - 4) ***Percentage of Claims Approved***
 - 5) ***Average State Cost per Claim Processed***
 - ***The Department of Veterans Affairs ranks 17th in the nation for obtaining benefits for our veterans.***
10. Provide a list of all sources of revenue that are not appropriated. These funds could include restricted or off budget accounts. Also, please provide the amount anticipated to be used in FY 17, the amount in FY 18, and any balance or reserve amount for each source or revenue.
- ***None.***

Sincerely,



Homer F. Rodgers
Undersecretary
Louisiana Dept. of Veterans Affairs

Cc: Joey Strickland, Secretary, Louisiana Dept. of Veteran Affairs
Matt Farlow, Deputy Undersecretary, Louisiana Dept. of Veteran Affairs